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Peacekeeping:

United Nations Role Sharing

by William H. Lewis

Conclusions

- Efforts of the United States, Canada and others to strengthen the UN's competence to manage complex peace operations have borne fruit.
- The UN peacekeeping infrastructure has been strengthened through reorganization and the addition of highly qualified personnel.
- The Secretariat has enhanced its management capabilities.
- However, proliferating conflict situations, financial stringencies, the reluctance of some UN members, and competing interests within the UN impede reform.
- Despite improved oversight capacities, the Security Council has indicated that it intends to be cautious in authorizing new peacekeeping operations, especially when cease-fire agreements by disputants are absent. As a result, major UN peace operations are less likely in the foreseeable future.
- UN Secretariat emphasis will be closer coordination between itself and humanitarian assistance agencies assisting war-ravaged nation-states, as well as shoring up ties with regional groups who assume increased peacekeeping roles.

Strengthening UN Capabilities

Decisions made by the UN Security Council (UNSC) during the remainder of 1996 will determine whether the organization is able to maintain its progress in building a competence to manage peacekeeping operations involving military forces. Considerable progress has been made since 1992. The United States, Canada and other governments have actively supported efforts to enhance the Secretariat's capacity to plan and manage military operations to include more effective coordination among the UN elements. In 1994, three new departments known as the Triad were created to function as crisis management and coordinating centers for the Secretary-General. The Department of Political

Affairs (DPA) would deal with political questions; the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DKPO) would be the mission planner and operator; and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) would coordinate the UN's civilian agencies." The integration of several civilian and military Secretariat elements, including field operations, into a single DPKO was a major part of the reform.

Other improvements over the past 24 months give the UN its first professional apparatus for managing peacekeeping. These include:

- A major increase in the number of expatriate staff for DPKO, including secondment by member countries of over 100 military officers (12 from the United States);
- Creation of a 24-hour-a-day situation room to monitor field operations by UN elements and to provide early warning of crises;
- Establishment of a mission planning staff to provide estimates of troops, materiel, and financial needs when contemplating peace operations;
- Creation of a professional training program for officers assigned to peacekeeping missions; and
- Development of an intelligence sharing system, largely U.S., responsive to the needs of senior Secretariat officials.

The UN leadership has also established a small permanent core staff of experienced military officers for contingency planning and immediate dispatch to crisis areas as an advance Headquarters unit.

Strategic Overstretch

Despite these notable gains in the management of UN-deployed peacekeeping forces, the Headquarters Secretariat recognizes that the organization has a limited capacity to deal with the "complex emergencies" arising from the collapse of nation-state authority in Africa and elsewhere, as well as those requiring the use of large military forces. The real and proliferating dangers since 1989 have been the murderous conflicts within member countries. The collapse of governing institutions, the deaths of thousands of civilians, as well as the migration of millions of refugees across borders threaten the stability of neighbors. The UN has learned that, although such turbulence is an underlying constant in the international arena, some UN members, after the experience of UNOSOM II in Somalia and UNPROFOR in Bosnia are no longer prepared to make available the military forces and budgetary support for major operations, absent clear consent by all major parties to the conflict.

The widening demand for international intervention to address burgeoning crisis situations led Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to observe in his January 1995 report Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: "This increased volume of activity would have strained the organization even if the nature of the activity had remained unchanged." His report to the UNSC reflected the growing pessimism within the UN following failed operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Angola, and Rwanda. Boutros-Ghali also complained about the mounting costs of peacekeeping operations and the failure of key member states to provide essential funding: "The difficult financial situation . . . is increasingly proving to be the most serious obstacle to the effective management of the organization." Clearly peacekeeping operating costs had risen dramatically. From 1948 through January 1995, the estimated total cost had been \$15.4 billion; in 1995 alone, operating costs exceeded \$3 billion.

The United States has been among the leaders in calling for UN reform, in part to reduce personnel in redundant agencies and to more tightly integrate agencies linked to humanitarian assistance and expanded peacekeeping missions. At the same time, there is widening discussion driven by financial stringency of the need to scale back or end long-running missions or those offering little hope for successful completion. As of mid-1996, the UN was conducting 16 operations worldwide (see chart).

The forces now in Macedonia, Bosnia, and Croatia grew out of the original UNPROFOR mission to the former Yugoslavia that began in 1992. Similarly, in Angola, the mission is a follow-on to a conflict resolution effort that failed in 1991-92. The anticipated 1996 cost of peacekeeping operations is about \$1.5 billion, a 50 percent reduction compared to 1995. The U.S. shortfall for peacekeeping operations is nearing \$1 billion (one half of the total shortfall), a situation that significantly diminishes U.S. efforts to induce further reforms and improvements in UN program management. The acute shortage of funds, plus criticism by the United States and others of UN peacekeeping management, and the reluctance of the United States to have its forces participate in UN peacekeeping has sharply reduced the willingness of other states to participate.

| Current UN Missions, Troops, Duration | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. India/Pakistan 44 Since 1949 | 2. Cyprus 1,199 Since 1974 | 3. Golan Heights 1,059 Since 1974 | 4. Middle East (Observers in southern Lebanon, Egypt) 178 Since 1948 |
| 5. Georgia 130 Since 1989 | 6. Iraq/Kuwait 1,179 Since 1991 | 7. Western Sahara 367 Since 1991 | 8. Haiti 700 Since 1993 |
| 9. Liberia 91 Since 1993 | 10. Tajikistan 44 Since 1994 | 11. Angola 1,700 Since 1995 | 12. Lebanon 1,800 Since 1995 |
| 13. Bosnia 374 Residual since 1995 (In addition to NATO IFOR) | 14. Macedonia 1,225 Since 1995 | 15. Croatia (eastern Slavonia) 2,909 Since 1995 | 16. Croatia (Adriatic Observers) 28 Since 1996 |

Tough Threshold Questions

The UN's evaluation of the debris left over from civil wars and failed operations has led to a Secretariat understanding of what works and what does not. Blame has been generously scattered. The UN's in-house procedures are tired and cumbersome; its rapid response capabilities, while improved, rely on consensus by the UNSC "Perm Five"; its members tend to expect miracles without pain to themselves—a no-risk, little cost strategy; the UNSC votes resolutions and mandates that are unrealistic and/or fails to provide the resources, or will, to carry them out successfully. Among the majority of member states there is growing sentiment that the United States no longer regards the UN as a responsible, useful organization for peace operations. They note that, in Somalia, "the Americans bypassed the UN, though they blamed it when things went wrong." Scapegoating aside, several lessons have been drawn:

- The UN should avoid situations, as in Somali and Bosnia, where it is expected to undertake a combined military-humanitarian mission in conditions of civil war where no side has signaled a

desire to end the conflict.

- A clear distinction must be made between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Confusing the strategic goals of war fighting and peacekeeping will risk the success of the mission and also the lives of the peacekeepers and aid workers.
- Without suitable military backup, a force deployed in a humanitarian aid role is precluded, by its rules of engagement, from acting as a power that can dictate its own actions within a region.
- Acting as an occupying power can produce serious opposition from indigenous forces, who generate significant popular support. This, in sum, negatively effects the political will of troop contributors.

The traditional UN peacekeeping precepts of impartiality and neutrality cannot be sustained when non-combatant status is eroding in situations of ongoing internal conflict. On the other hand, the UNSC is resistant to taking enforcement actions against those who refuse to comply with its resolutions. The UN debacles of Bosnia and Somalia will have the probable affect of ending the period of large-scale UN peacekeeping operations. When situations require, responsibility for remedial action will fall to ad hoc coalitions, a leading major power, or an organization such as NATO which has substantial military capabilities. Even where the UN is called upon to undertake traditional forms of peace operations, it must address several questions:

- Is there a real threat to international peace and security?
- Does the mission have a clear objective?
- Can an end point be identified for those who will be asked to participate?
- Are the forces, financing and mandate that will be needed to accomplish the mission available?

The President has set even more concrete guidelines for the United States. They are imbedded in Presidential Decision Directive-25 (PDD-25), signed on May 4, 1994, as a basis on which to determine whether U.S. forces should be supplied for peace operations under UN mandate. In addition to the above questions, PDD-25 stresses the need for cease-fires before deployment, adequate means to accomplish a mission, a realistic end point, and an assessment that the result of inaction would prove unacceptable to both the United States and the UN.

Diminished Capacity: The Implications

Although the UN is better prepared to organize traditional peacekeeping operations, it is doing less of it. PDD-25 principles have been applied by other countries, not just the United States, and have played a major role in shaping UN policy choices. They influenced the Somalia withdrawal decision by the UNSC; they led to delays in organizing and dispatching a UN force to Angola (UNAVEM III) pending observance of a cease-fire; they produced a reduction of the UN observer contingent in Liberia (UNOMIL); they influenced the slow response to the genocide taking place in Rwanda in 1994; they were also reflected in the UNSC's unwillingness to approve the Boutros-Ghali recommendation to deploy a preventive force to Burundi (1995-present) and a security force to Zairian refugee camps. The Council rejected his proposals on the grounds that the goals were not clear and realistic, or that the means proposed were not adequate.

The UN for the foreseeable future is likely to have only limited leverage when asked to consider intervention in situations of internal conflict and humanitarian disaster. As missions close down, new ones will be fewer and smaller. Even when internal conflicts appear near resolution, the UNSC will be loathe to enlarge its personnel presence to ensure ceasefires are honored. In the case of Liberia, agreement among contending factions was reported in 1995, but UNOMIL observers were not increased substantially. Peacekeeper deaths in Rwanda, abductions in Bosnia, and frustration with overall UN efforts in Somali, Bosnia, and elsewhere have resulted in an UNSC and Headquarters Secretariat reluctant to task the UN with new solo peacekeeping missions.

Patterns for the Future?

It will probably be a long time before the UNSC again authorizes, in the midst of ongoing conflict, another of the hybrid operations that spiraled seemingly out of control in a flurry of council resolutions earlier in this decade. Nor is the Council likely to plan for the creation of a UN standing quick reaction force, as some Western European representatives have urged. In the foreseeable future, when confronted with large, complex emergencies, the UN will have to rely for a first response on larger nations with regional interests-however much this approach raises fears of cementing regional spheres of influence; Russia in Central Asia, France in Africa, the United States in the Caribbean.

UN roles and responsibilities shared with other agencies are likely to remain the prevailing pattern for the future. Some may involve UN sub-contracting as in the case of Desert Storm, Somali, Rwanda and Haiti. Some may involve initial sub-contracting with shared follow-on responsibilities under UN direction-Operation Uphold Democracy (U.S.) and now the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). The United States and other NATO members provided personnel, aircraft and ships in support of UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia. These coalition operations were endorsed by the UNSC but were outside the formal UN framework. In the case of Liberia and Georgia, the UNSC gave its consent-and attached a peacemaking mission-to peacekeeping operations being conducted outside the formal UN framework (by ECOWAS in Liberia and the CIS/Russia in Georgia).

Helping in a crisis after belligerent states have stopped fighting is, more or less, the classic interpretation of the UN's role. This role rarely fits today without the assistance of ad hoc coalitions, regional groupings, or the United States. The major challenge for the reorganized Secretariat is to find ways to restore confidence in its newly established capabilities and to find an appropriate "fit" with other international actors now engaged in peace operations.

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